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Lucia A Keegan 09/18/2006 10:22:02 AM From DB/Inbox: Lucia A Keegan

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - GWOT - Latest Al-Qaida Video -
Turkey - Syria Afghanistan Islam and the West
Sarkozy to the U.S.
PARIS - Thursday, September 14, 2006

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

GWOT - Latest Al-Qaida Video - Turkey - Syria
Afghanistan
Islam and the West
Sarkozy to the U.S.

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

Le Figaro devotes its front page to the latest Al-Qaida video and the call to Islamists to target the French. According to the front-page article, "French intelligence is taking these threats very seriously." (See Part C) Meanwhile the bottom half of Le Figaro's front page is devoted to President Chirac's call for a "dialogue between cultures" as he denounced the "divorce between the West and Islam" in a speech at the Elysee which served to launch

"cultural workshops" between Europe, the Mediterranean and Gulf nations. President Chirac said "that to counter the shock caused by ignorance, arrogance and stupidity, we must return to a dialogue." Several op-eds and columns in Le Figaro deal with related subjects: in the third installment of its post-9/11 series, Amr al-Choubaki, a political strategy specialist in Cairo, pens an opinion column entitled "The Arabs Want Leaders Who Can Oppose President Bush" in which he looks at how 9/11 has changed the Middle East. (See Part C)

Also in Le Figaro Pierre Prier analyzes the changing role of Hamas, "now that it plays in political role. With its decision to get into politics, Hamas necessarily had to put religion on a backburner." Liberation reports on the call from Palestinian businessmen to the political class in order to "avoid economic chaos in Gaza." In Le Figaro Patrick Saint-Paul writes: "The U.S. is not totally in favor of a Hamas-Fatah coalition and quotes Assistant Secretary David Welch: "We are not aware of all the details of the new government, but at first glance, it does not fulfill all the preset conditions..." In his weekly column in Le Figaro Alexandre Adler contends that the latest attacks in Turkey and Syria are "unjustly penalizing these two countries." For Adler, the recent attack in Damascus was not "a manipulation of Syria's secret service." As for Turkey, Adler believes Europe is responsible for "lighting small fires which trigger internal strife, such as including the debate on the Armenian genocide in the talks on Turkey's EU membership." (See Part C)

Afghanistan is back prominently in the news. La Croix devotes a major interview to General James Jones who says: "Generations will be needed before Afghanistan can be put back on its feet." He explains the need additional forces, but notes: "France has always been one of the major NATO contributors in terms of troops and has nothing to be ashamed of." In Le Figaro Alexandrine Bouilhet reports that "NATO is increasingly having difficulties finding the needed military support." (See Part C) Le Figaro quotes U.S. General Mark Kimmit, in charge of strategy and planning for Iraq and Afghanistan, in an article entitled: "It Is Not Civil War Yet in Iraq" and Liberation reveals that a Frenchman jailed in Iraq for the past two years has just been sentenced to serve 15 years "for illegal entry into Iraq."

Interior Minister Sarkozy's meeting with President Bush continues to elicit commentaries. The editorial in communist L'Humanite, devoted to Sarkozy's trip to the U.S., contends that "his and the U.S. President's views on foreign policy converge." Le Parisien quotes Sarkozy's comments on his meeting with President Bush: "He is a straight and loyal guy... He did not want a diplomatic meeting... and was lucid enough to perceive the complication of the situation... What separates him from me? He was elected President twice..." Le Figaro carries a picture of Sarkozy during his meeting with Secretary Rice and entitles its article: "Sarkozy Takes Full Credit for his American Success." (See Part C) Le Monde comments: "Sarkozy Aligns with Bush on Middle East"

Liberation reports on its front page "GMO Rice Coming to Us From America." Le Figaro entitles its article: "Modified Rice: Industrialists Denounce America's Laxity."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

GWOT - Latest Al-Qaida Video - Turkey - Syria

"Al-Qaida Designates France as a Target"

Jean Chichizola in right-of-center Le Figaro (09/14): "The latest Al-Qaida video distinctly points to France and points to the GPSC as the group which should fight the 'French crusaders...' The Algerian Salafist GSPC is said to have joined the ranks of Al-Qaida and is to hit the 'miscreants' who do not 'allow women to wear the veil...' France's intelligence services are taking the threats very seriously... particularly because UN resolution 1701 on UNIFIL is clearly mentioned... The group, which has lost some of its luster in Algeria, has decided to turn to international terrorism and join the international Jihad movement. According to intelligence specialists, this gives the group wider propaganda: the support of Ben Laden and Al Zawahiri revamps their image in the eyes fundamentalists."

"Turkey and Syria Unjustly Penalized"

Alexandre Adler in right-of-center Le Figaro (09/14): "The recent attack against the U.S. Embassy in Damascus cannot seriously be regarded as the result of manipulation by Syria's secret service... Clearly, the intent was to completely destroy the U.S. Embassy and to undermine Bashar al-Assad's authority. The grateful and almost warm thanks which Secretary Rice sent to Assad is a sign that the U.S. has understood the attack is the work of Al-Qaida and that the target was more the Syrian regime than the U.S. Time in Syria is now running short and the double tier of power cannot continue indefinitely... In Turkey, what is lighting the fires is Europe's hypocritical maneuvering, with a potential for collateral damage the EU does not fully measure... Including the debate on the Armenian genocide in the talks on Turkey's EU membership is akin to provoking Turkish public opinion and the government... Has everyone understood what Assad and Turkey's isolation can cost us in the Middle East crisis? In this particular instance we are not dealing with America's unilateralism but rather with the small-mindedness of Europe's bourgeoisie."

Afghanistan

"NATO Hard Pressed to Find Re-enforcements"

Alexandrine Bouilhet in right-of-center Le Figaro (09/14): "The calls made by General James Jones have remained unanswered... Germany and Europe in general have been claiming they cannot send troops both to Lebanon and to Southern Afghanistan... France in particular has sent out the message it was overstretched... But, says a French diplomat, 'France cannot be faulted. It has proved its solidarity.' Despite the need for additional troops, operation 'Medusa' is registering success."

Islam and the West

"The Arabs Want Leaders Who Can Oppose President Bush"

Amr al-Choubaki, a political strategy specialist in Cairo, in right-of-center Le Figaro (09/14): "Everyone talks about how 9/11 has affected the U.S. But few analyze how the war on terror has upset the Middle East. Has it brought peace and democracy to the region? And if not, is there a chance the next U.S. administration will have learned the proper lesson? One major problem is that the U.S. oversimplified the situation, adopting a narrow view of terrorism and a simple definition of democracy... thinking it was possible to send in new leaders along with troops, both in Iraq and Afghanistan... Democracy requires local governments to implement reforms... In Iraq, the U.S. has practically done the reverse... and missed the opportunity to promote democracy... The situation in Iraq stems from America's error, assimilating al-Qaida-led terrorism with resistance movements such as Hezbollah, Hamas and Jihad... The U.S. and Israel continue to amalgamate terrorism with resistance... forgetting to see the reasons behind resistance movements... Arab populations do not want their leaders to obey American orders... They want a political class similar to the one emerging in Latin America... The Bush Administration does not want to take into account the emotion and political significance of the protest... But to gag the protesters is dangerous... Fortunately, UN resolution 1701 does not fully stick to the American-Israeli vision of the war against terror... In the past five years, the Middle East has become a high risk region... Terrorism will end only when the root causes are eradicated... We need an environment in which moderate Islam can look at democracy as an ideal and a goal... The war against terror has a price which neither the U.S., Israel, Arab regimes nor Islamic movements have wanted to pay. The Arabs need to be convinced that victory over terrorism will bring them democracy, justice and development."

Sarkozy to the U.S.

"Sarkozy's American Success"

Judith Waintraub in right-of-center Le Figaro (09/14): "All summer long, Nicolas Sarkozy worked on his English. One hour everyday... and his work paid off. Almost without any help from the interpreter Sarkozy was able to have a discussion with George W. Bush on Tuesday at the White House... Last week, the US Ambassador to France Craig [R. Stapleton](#) met with Nicolas Sarkozy to warn him that the President had asked to meet him... George Bush directly expressed his sympathy for his interlocutor praising him for his speech that very morning at the Franco-American Foundation... This meeting marks Sarkozy's strategic success as a player on the international

scene... Washington has confirmed that if Segolene Royal goes to the US she will receive the same treatment and be able to meet with President Bush... If she so wishes." STAPLETON